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LITERARY WORK.

WITHIN the memory of middle-aged persons, literature has become more significantly an independent profession than it ever was before. In the early part of last century, as is well known from many facetious traditions, an author was ordinarily a poor creature who required a titled patron to countenance his production, and bespeak for it public favour. Hence the grovelling adulatory dedications to noblemen which we see in old books. That sycophantic period had its day. Then came the time when writers looked only to publishers possessing sufficient enterprise and judgment to purchase and bring their works into notice. There is no end of anecdotes about the alleged overbearing arrogance of these tradesmen, and their cruel dealings towards authors. A sad time it was, no doubt, when men such as Goldsmith went about asking publishers to give them a few pounds for a poem, a prose fiction, or some other product of their genius which they timidly offered for inspection.

Sad as such a picture of humiliation was, we in justice ought not to hurry to the conclusion that long ago publishers were a set of heartless scoundrels, who made a point of plundering authors of their wares. It is to be recollected that in these past times there was a comparatively limited reading or book-buying public. Few of the operative classes could read or write. Female domestics, sempstresses, and farmers' wives were quite as ignorant. Hardly any among what we call the middle classes bought books. Many country-towns had no bookseller at all. Only at fairs and markets was anything in the shape of paper and print offered for sale, and generally of a very humble kind. A taste for literature of a superior order, honoured with the imprints of London booksellers, was confined mainly to the wealthy in large cities, and to members of the learned professions. In some country mansions of the landed gentry there was not a single volume in general literature, and newspapers were almost as rare. With so poor a prospect of customers, the

publishers required to be cautious in their dealings with writers, however estimable might be their productions. Although placed in the front rank of authors by his poem of 'The Traveller,' Goldsmith was fain to sell the copyright of his 'Vicar of Wakefield' for five-and-twenty pounds. By no words could we more emphatically refer to the mean reward still given for literary exertion a hundred years ago, than that so insignificant a sum should have been paid for this matchless fiction.

Matters were not greatly mended in the early years of the present century. A crowd of novelists had grown up to supply materials for circulating libraries, and the price they got for their productions was usually thirty pounds for three volumes; which, considering the quality, were dear at the money. Miss Edgeworth gained higher rewards, still nothing to speak of. The 'Edinburgh' and 'Quarterly' Reviews were now beginning to stimulate the public taste for literature. Though the war with France, which was felt to be a kind of death-struggle with Bonaparte, was obstructive of social advancement, it did some good, by creating a thirst for intelligence through the newspapers. Reading was greatly on the increase when Scott and Byron burst on the world like unforeseen meteors. The earlier poems of Scott created quite a furor. When it was known that two thousand guineas had been paid for the 'Lady of the Lake,' it was received as a fact in authorcraft which at that time had never been paralleled. Notwithstanding this success, Constable was doubtful if Scott would shine as a novelist, and offered him only seven hundred pounds for 'Waverley,' which was refused. It was a mistake keenly regretted, for 'Waverley' very shortly ran through eight editions, and was rapidly followed by other works, which were received with an equal amount of favour. 'There were giants in those days!' We have seen nothing like them since.

The most remarkable feature in modern literary work is the rise of periodicals appealing to large numbers of readers. The old five-shilling reviews—great in their day—are almost left in the condi-

tion of a vessel stranded for want of tide. There are now weekly and monthly periodicals of a cheap class which give employment to thousands of skilled writers, and which, in point of circulation, leave the old respectabilities immeasurably behind. In the Victorian era, we may be said to have got into a new literary world. The dull solemnities and political partisanship of the Georgian era will no longer do. There has grown up a hatred of shams, and of views perverted by political prejudice. Along with the sparkle of humour, readers desire to have something like impartiality and common-sense, no matter what may be the subject under treatment.

The revolution has been brought about by a demand for light reading consequent on social development. It may be admitted that this demand is not in all respects wholesome. Many writers of fiction seem to draw on the wildest fancies, and their productions are pretty much on a par with the old *Minerva* class of novels, the remuneration for which was rated at ten pounds a volume. But besides these, there are writers of a higher stamp who devote themselves to the composition of fiction on quite a comprehensive scale. They sell the product of their brain three or four times over. Their novel first appears in a weekly or monthly periodical, and according to reputation, will be paid by an honorarium varying from a hundred to a thousand pounds. While so running its course from month to month over half a year, advance proofs are transmitted by the writer to a publisher in the United States or Australia, perhaps both, and there, in these distant lands, the novel is appearing in a periodical at the same time it is going on in England. Having done its work in the periodicals all over the globe, it is issued in London as a three-volume novel, at a guinea and a half, in which shape it flourishes in all the circulating libraries. The next form it assumes is probably that of a volume bound in cloth at five shillings, which suits a certain class of customers. The life is not out of it yet. It is reprinted in a volume in small type, with a blazing yellow paper cover, at the modest price of a shilling. This is the form in which it appears on the railway book-stalls; after which usually no more can be made of it.

For these manifold successes the novelist has to thank the prodigious number and variety of readers. In every form in which the fiction appears it suits a particular class, and to every class in turn it seems new and attractive. In our days therefore authorcraft has a scope far beyond what was known or imagined in former times. The rewards of literature are increasing in proportion as people are taught to read, and as in the progress of affairs the taste for literary recreation is extended. Walter Scott used to say that literature was a good cane to walk with, but not a staff to lean upon. Since his time, literature has become a staff of a very effectual kind. It has risen from amateurship to a recognised and honoured profession.

London is of course the centre of literary work in England, because the metropolis offers every appliance—the library of the British Museum ready at all times to aid the literary man in his researches, publishers who have business relationships with all parts of the world, printers with every appliance in typography, wholesale sta-

tioners who have ever on hand huge stocks of paper, artists to promptly furnish every kind of illustration, newspapers and critical journals to record novelties, and added to all a literary society in which the author and authoress find an agreeable fellowship. For some kinds of literary work, Oxford and Cambridge possess peculiar advantages. Edinburgh is less favourably situated; yet with the aids generously offered by the Advocates' Library, it maintains a brave struggle, while as respects certain departments in printing and forwarding it has an advantage over London in the article of cheaper labour. Where large impressions have to be produced, this is a matter of first concern. With this in its favour, the cost of transmitting masses of paper and print to branch houses in London is comparatively insignificant. Edinburgh, however, labours under the drawback of having for the most part to procure supplies of the lighter kinds of writing from the metropolis. In these days of cheap and rapid postage, this is got over to some extent; but there still remains the discouraging local and national deficiency, arising not only from the superior attractions of London, but from the constant misexpenditure of excellent brain in Scotland on the dreary muddle of sectarianism.

Wherever produced, English literature is now a large matter of export to every English-speaking country except the United States, in which there are heavy import duties, and no protection from invasion of copyright. A few novelists and other writers are able to secure a definite payment for advance-sheets; but the great bulk of English literature is exposed to unlicensed appropriation in the States. In other words, there is no law in that country to prevent a publisher from reprinting any new book from England he can lay his hands on. This is an exceedingly convenient process of rearing a business on the brains of British writers. While a London publisher is paying probably a thousand pounds for the copyright of a book, the American publisher has the pleasure of getting the book for nothing. Carried on from year to year on a wholesale plan, this species of appropriation has led to the natural result of discouraging the growth of American authorship, which for a great nation is not a creditable state of things.

The truth appears to be that, as regards literature, the United States are under the thralldom of a few large publishing concerns in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. They contrive to get so heavy an import duty imposed on English books as to keep them out of the country. They then proceed to execute reprints from copies procured by mail, and so keep the market to themselves. It is a beautiful instance of trade protection, which inflicts a wrong on a whole nation to serve the purposes of a few selfish individuals. Hitherto there has been an understanding among these monopolists, that any one of them who was the first to issue an English book should not be competed against by others. By priority, he acquired a special privilege known as the 'courtesy of the trade.' When some unscrupulous individual attempted to issue a rival edition, he was immediately run down by the publication of a cheaper edition, and thus the monopoly was sustained.

The proper cure for all this is, of course,

an international law, by which English writers would secure copyright in America, and American writers secure copyright in England. But to every proposal of this kind the Americans, under the influence of the confederated publishers of New York and other places, have steadily objected. According to recent accounts, leading members of this unscrupulous body have been brought to a consciousness that some kind of international copyright is desirable. The cause of their conversion to a sense of propriety is amusing. In late years, publishers have sprung up in Chicago, who look with contempt on the 'courtesy of the trade,' and possess the tact as well as the means to baffle it. When a New York publisher brings out an edition of an English novel at a dollar, the Chicago tradesman issues an edition of the same work at ten cents or fivepence, which at once reduces the monopolist to despair. As regards that particular book he may as well shut up shop. It is a case of diamond cut diamond, out of which possibly good may come.

Circumvented, humiliated, the confederated monopolists have taken up new ground. They will be content to give British authors copyright for their works in America, provided the works are issued by American publishers. The meaning of this is, that a limited number of firms may still have the privilege of keeping everything to themselves; for that would be the result under any such arrangement. If not devoid of decency and honesty, they will frankly unite in promoting a system of international copyright, by which all on both sides of the Atlantic would start fair, and allow freedom of trade in literature to take its course. Surely there are large numbers of people in the United States who must be not a little ashamed of the shabby shifts of a few publishers in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, to live by the systematic reprinting of English copyrights, and who on reflection would endeavour to put an end to a state of things so exceedingly disreputable. Meanwhile, we are rather glad that Chicago interlopers have had the audacity to break up the monopoly of the few firms which have so long domineered over the general interests of literature. The result can scarcely fail to be beneficial.

w. c.

YOUNG LORD PENRITH.

CHAPTER XXX.—UNDER A CLOUD.

LADY LARPENT, after the visit of the Black Miller of Pen Mawth, was in anything but an enviable frame of mind. The Dowager was, as women go, a thoroughly good woman. There might be a little worldly rust about her heart, but the heart itself was of sterling gold. In truth, her weak point, as often happens with us, was precisely what she deemed her strongest coign of vantage, her shrewd, cool, prudent head. She had the pride of intellect far more than the coarser pride of rank or money. If she detected a knavish servant, or struck out a wrongful item in a tradesman's bill, she was vainer of her victory than of the fact that her wealth and rank and strength of will made her a personage and a power in the land. Now she was wounded, galled, stung, and that precisely where the smart was sharpest, in that her knowledge of the world had to all appearance been grossly at fault.

She had thought so well of Hugh Ashton!

Other protégés she had, in common parlance, taken up, merely to find them fall short of her estimate, or break in her hands. But this noble young fellow had borne himself hitherto with a gallantry and a discretion that did credit to her choice. Secretly, she had sighed more than once as she contrasted her own coxcomb of a son, callous, flippant, dead to generous impulse, and this brave young Hugh. Had she but had such a son as Hugh Ashton— But that being impossible, she had cherished vague projects of future promotion for the fisherman of Bala Lake; and all the bitterer was the disenchantment that followed. Nobody likes to have wasted kindness on an unworthy object, and Lady Larpent the least of all. And that Hugh was unworthy, the Dowager very much feared. She had taken him on trust. Of his past life she knew, save from his own lips, nothing at all. And how if his own account of his past life had been untrue; how, if he had left out something, the mention of which would have condemned him!

That the Black Miller was an enemy of Hugh's she never for an instant doubted. But then, enmity is not necessarily co-existent with calumny. But for private hate, for private resentment, the law would most rarely be invoked to redress wrongs or to punish the wrong-doer. Justice awaits, in passive attitude and with bandaged eyes, the moment when the cry of human suffering shall cause her to make use of sword or scales. And Ralph Swart had done his work well. Lady Larpent hardly knew how much her crafty visitor had contrived to suggest, and how little he had managed to affirm. He had said, roundly, that he intended Hugh to be his own accuser. He had laid down, as if unconsciously, the lines on which the Dowager might act. There was to be no formal charge, but merely a query or two; and the Black Miller had shewn a grim confidence as to the result, which, although unwelcome, was contagious. Under the influence of these newly formed suspicions, the lady of Llosthuel had written to Hugh requesting his prompt attendance at Llosthuel Court.

The missive sealed and despatched, Lady Larpent awaited, with a nervous impatience that surprised herself, the coming of him whom she had summoned to receive, it well might be, his sentence of dismissal and disgrace. For a time she remained in her study, making an elaborate pretence of being extremely busy; but the figures in her columns of accounts swam and danced before her eyes, and the letters she perused joined in one monotonous chorus of 'Hugh Ashton—guilty—guilty—guilty!' Then she locked up her letters, and went back to the drawing-room, and was absent, moody, and snappish in her talk with her niece, until Maud marvelled what had befallen her kind, shrewd aunt, to change her thus.

'Captain Ashton—in the study, please, my Lady,' murmured obsequious Parker; and to the study Lady Larpent once more repaired. Hugh wondered that his patroness answered his salutation by so cold a bow.

'Please to sit down, Captain Ashton,' said the Dowager stiffly, as she took, with a more judicial air than usual, her own seat in her high-backed chair. 'I have sent for you—on a painful errand this time, Captain Ashton.'

'Indeed, Lady Larpent?' returned Hugh, turn-

ing his frank eyes towards his kind old friend, whose changed manner puzzled him.

'Yes; I have heard—no matter what—suffice it,' continued the Dowager, 'that it seems as though you had not told me, Mr Ashton, all that I had a right to know.'

Hugh started and reddened. Start and flush were very slight, but quite sufficient to be marked by a keen observer on the look-out for such signs, and ready to draw deductions from them.

'I do not quite, Lady Larpent, apprehend your meaning,' he said.

'I will put the case more clearly,' resumed the Dowager, with a look of annoyance. 'I do not think you have been as explicit with me as—as—perhaps you might have been. Are you sure, for instance, that your right name is Ashton?'

Again Hugh winced perceptibly. 'I bear the name as my father bore it,' he replied with some awkwardness.

'Of that I am aware,' rejoined the Dowager coldly. 'You have led a wandering life, Mr Ashton, and it signifies little, no doubt, as to a mere name. There is a more important topic on which I must speak. Of my own regard for you, and—the high opinion we have all had of you, and the debt of gratitude due to the preserver of my niece's life, I need not speak. I have done my best to be your friend, have I not?'

'Indeed, Lady Larpent, you have,' answered Hugh; and his handsome young face looked so honest and true as he spoke the words, that it was almost with a sob, which she turned into a cough, that Lady Larpent resumed: 'The more shame for you, Hugh Ashton, then, if, as I fear is the case, you have deceived me!'

'Deceived you, Lady Larpent!' cried Hugh, starting to his feet.

'Deceived us all, I may say,' continued the Dowager, who, the ice once broken, went on with all of a woman's outspoken vehemence of complaint, 'since we have all had an opinion of you which—which I hope may have been deserved. I believed what you told me, the very little that you told me, of your past years, as sailor and colonist, and was content to take you and your father for plain, honest boatmen, with education and manners, I admit, superior to your station. Since then, it has come to my ears'—

The Dowager hesitated here; and Hugh Ashton asked, half sternly: 'I have not yet learned what it is which has reached your Ladyship's ears concerning me.'

'That you have not been open with us, and candid, and sincere, Captain Ashton,' answered Lady Larpent, eyeing Hugh as though she hoped to search his heart with the intensity of her gaze; 'that you have exercised a reticence—perhaps a prudent one—as to secrets which'—

'Secrets!' Hugh could not help repeating the word, although he did it with a quivering lip and a troubled mien, which added fuel to the fire of the Dowager's very natural suspicions.

'Secrets,' said the Dowager, knitting her impetuous brows, 'are never desirable, of course; but they need not imply sin or shame. You best know, young man, if that which you have hitherto kept is innocent or not.'

'Spare me this!' muttered Hugh huskily, as he shaded his eyes with his open hand and turned his face away.

'I have been most friendly towards you, Mr Ashton, in thought, and word, and deed,' pursued the Dowager. 'It is, then, as a friend that I ask of you, has nothing, nothing of serious import been kept back? Are you, in fact, what you seem to be?'

'You have been well informed, I fear, Lady Larpent; by what means I cannot guess—too well informed,' answered Hugh in a broken voice.

In the Dowager's ears this was tantamount to a confession of guilt. And yet it was pity of him too, she felt, this hidden sin, done years ago, it might be, coming home, like a halting Nemesis, to this gallant youth, who had seemed the very soul of unselfish courage and stainless faith. What had he done? It was difficult to connect the idea of Hugh Ashton with any mean crime, such as peoples our jails, with forgery or theft for instance. But a bushranger's career of desperate adventure might have had temptations for so daring a spirit, or there might be blood on that hand—the hand that had saved Maud's life!

'If you could explain'—began Lady Larpent, with weighty patience; but Hugh interrupted her.

'I cannot!' he said, with a groan. 'I would give the best years of my life, if— But that is useless now. I had hoped, in an obscure situation and lonely place, that the past might be buried. It seems,' he added bitterly, 'that I was wrong, and that the finger of shame may be pointed at me even here.'

'Then, Captain Ashton,' said the Dowager, with a touch of magisterial severity, 'is it not for yourself to decide whether you will risk exposure to—to unpleasantness, by remaining any longer in Treport? I cannot—that is to say, the Board cannot, deprive you of your post as Captain of our steamer on mere suspicion, certainly. But if you stay, and challenge proof of what you scarcely affect to deny, the whole story will become public, and you could scarcely avoid resigning your appointment, even if'—

'You are right, Lady Larpent. Yes; I feel I ought to go,' returned the young man, hiding his face and letting his head droop sadly upon his breast. 'What I regret the most is the loss—so it seems—of your good opinion.' The dejection of his attitude, the muffled sound of his low voice, moved the Dowager to pity while confirming her suspicions.

'I would have given much, Hugh Ashton, to have heard you justify'—she said falteringly.

'The task, though I would lay down my life for it, is beyond me,' said the young man gloomily. 'I can but go, and that, Lady Larpent, I will do at once. May I hope that you will be silent as to what you have heard?'

'Certainly I will, if you consent to quit Treport without delay,' replied the Dowager. 'Nor do I forget your services to the family, or your good conduct here. Money may enable you to go abroad, and efface, by time and distance, the memory of the past. If a cheque for four hundred pounds, or five'—

'I thank you, Lady Larpent; but I need for nothing,' answered Hugh, drawing himself up to his full height, and speaking with a quiet dignity that became him well. 'The day may come, perhaps, when you may regret the severe judgment which you have formed of me.' He said no more,

but, with a slight inclination of the head, turned and left the room and the house. The last glance of the young sailor's sad, proud eyes haunted the Dowager's memory for many a day afterwards.

CHAPTER XXXI.—FAREWELL, MAUD.

It was a bright and beautiful morning which dawned upon the west of England, on the day following that on which Hugh Ashton had saved the bird-hunter's life, and had his own unsatisfactory interview with Lady Larpent. He was not one to loiter or to lose time when once his mind was made up, and already his few and simple preparations for departure had been effected. He had written to the Secretary of the Board, his employers, giving in the resignation of his command. The keys of the lockers in his cabin on board the steamer, with the telescope and some other objects belonging to the Tug and Salvage Company, he had intrusted to old Captain Trawl's care on behalf of their lawful owners. His own boxes were packed, and were to remain under the charge of his late kind host, until he should write to indicate the address to which they were to be forwarded.

A harder task than these merely mechanical duties Hugh Ashton found to be that of bidding farewell to his good friends beneath whose roof he dwelt, and without explaining the cause of his abrupt departure. That the young Captain of the *Western Maid* should suddenly throw up his appointment, quit the town in which he had come to be regarded with liking and respect, and renounce the occupation in which he had already won high credit with all, seemed utterly unaccountable. That Lady Larpent was somehow connected with Hugh's apparently capricious change of plans, was easily to be conjectured; but what could be the reasons that could have induced the imperious Lady Paramount of Llosthuel to desire the absence of one who had so lately been a prime favourite, and whose conduct since his promotion had surely been such as to content the most exacting patroness that ever lived! The thing was inexplicable.

Hugh, who alone possessed the key to the enigma, shook his head sadly when the old Captain and his grand-daughter questioned him on the subject of his abrupt change of plans. 'Do not ask me, dear friends, why I must leave you. Some day, perhaps— But now I can merely tell you that go I must, and that the *Western Maid* will never know my tread upon her deck again.' He avoided all unnecessary leave-takings. 'Wish Long Michael, and the crew, and the good fisher-folk, good-bye for me; and give them my best wishes,' he said to Will and Rose and the aged Captain; 'I shall not go among them again for a last hand-shake, but would rather get quietly out of Treport.'

Hugh had decided wisely when he determined not to bid his outspoken acquaintances on Treport quay and its vicinity a personal adieu. It was of course impossible to take a crowd into his confidence, and there would have been remonstrance, and regret, and cheering; for no stranger in the little coast town had ever become in so short a space of time one-half so popular as Hugh Ashton had done. As it was, he said farewell, sorrowfully enough, to his friends at the cottage door, and set

off on foot, with stick and bundle, like any poor sailor going to seek employment in some distant port. At the garden gate he turned for a last look at the group that remained, sadly watching him beside the door. There was the gray-haired old Captain, leaning on a staff, and by no means the sturdy figure to look upon that he had been a few short months ago; there was pretty Rose, with her affianced husband by her side; and there was the dwarfish form of Nezer, holding back the dog, which struggled boisterously in its efforts to follow Hugh. The young man waved his hat to them in token of farewell, and then was lost to sight.

Hugh had come into Treport, when first nominated to the command of the steamer, cheerily enough, and with fair prospects opening out before him. He was leaving the place now, sorrowful and weary-hearted, but steadfast as a sleuth-hound to the purpose to the fulfilment of which he had devoted his young life. Many thoughts passed through his busy brain as he climbed the steep hill-side, choosing unfrequented paths and by-lanes, where he was not likely to meet any who knew him. It would have been painful to him to have to stop and converse now with one who had made his acquaintance during his brief season of prosperity, and could not now perhaps refrain from expressions of curiosity or condolence. Once, from a turn in the road, he looked down upon the sea-side portion of the town, where the gabled houses clustered thickly together, where the nets were hung to dry from masts protruding from the windows, and where, in the quay-pool itself, in the midst of sails of many colours—orange, tawny, and red—lay the *Western Maid*, taut and trim. He shook his head sadly, and walked resolutely on.

Threading his way by devious tracks and those sinuous lanes which in country places often appear to have sprung spontaneously into existence, so trifling appears to be their utility to the common-weal, Hugh at length drew near to Llosthuel. The Court, as has been said, stands nobly forward on a swell of rising ground, and commands a pretty prospect of Treport nestling below, and a grand one of cliff and headland, and the measureless Atlantic flashing far away. But the grounds are less notable than the house. Many a Kent or Sussex squire with only three or four poor annual thousands to form his rent-roll, has a far more spacious and stately demesne to girdle in his red-brick Hall than had my Lady Larpent of Llosthuel, who was so rich. The fact is that Cornish gentlemen of fair estate, like French viscounts or Belgian barons, were in bygone times less desirous of privacy than were those of the squirearchy who dwelt east of the Tamar, and thus there was a tract of uninclosed common land which came very near to Llosthuel Court.

Hugh Ashton knew the place well. It was a spot where the wild rocks, with golden gorse and yellow broom rooting themselves in every cleft and crevice, came close up to the tall paling that shut in the well-kept rose-garden of the Court. No contrast could have been greater than that of the barren tract outside that charmed barrier—with its scarce grass and brown heather, the bushes, the bare stones, and a few black pine-trees bent and distorted by years of hopeless contest with the mighty sea-wind—and the trim parterres and velvet

lawn and wealth of colour within. But, bare, bleak, and uninviting as the ragged patch of rocky common land might be, it afforded to Hugh Ashton the opportunity which he sought, to gaze from afar, unseen, at Maud's windows, and to bid her an unspoken farewell. With a lover's ingenuity, he had found out, in the course of his occasional visits to the Court, which were the apartments that the Dowager had assigned to her beautiful niece. Those curtains of white and pink belonged probably to Maud's own chamber; the blue silken ones beyond, to the morning-room attached to it. Might it not be possible that if he did but watch long enough, he might catch a glimpse of Maud herself at a window! He smiled sadly enough at the boyish dream. No; he should not see her then; should see her, perhaps, never more. Never more! To a lover, that means much; means the loss of life's choicest zest and savour, a dull grayness in the pellucid atmosphere and the sparkling sky, an uneasy sense that there is something out of tune in the grand harmonies of the universe. And it was probable enough that Hugh and Maud, the one so high in station, and beauty, and prospective wealth, the other destined to earn a livelihood by dint of sheer hard work, would never meet again. Would she quite forget him? he wondered. And did she care for him, even a little, even as a friend of humble degree? for, mindful of the difference of position, he had never breathed to her a word that could reveal his love.

And yet how he loved her! how warmly and how truly, and yet with a knightly devotion and tenderness such as we are apt to consider as having died out with the death of the best era of semi-mythic chivalry. Had Hugh but lived six centuries before, he would have worn Maud's colours, and broken lances in tournament and battle-field for the fame of her beauty, and perhaps touched her heart, at last, by the renown of gallant deeds of derring-do performed for her dear sake. As it was, he was leaving Treport—he knew it—under a cloud of most undeserved disgrace. He had innocently forfeited Lady Larpen's good opinion; and he shrunk from the thought that Miss Stanhope, like the rest of the world, might put some uncharitable construction upon his abrupt exit from Treport.

'Farewell, Maud—farewell!' he murmured, as his gaze lingered long upon the windows of the rooms she occupied at Llosthuell. 'I go, perforce in silence, burying in my breast the love I have not dared to tell. Shall I—can I—ever hope to win her—ever hope that Maud will be my wife? It seems the mere madness of presumption even to dream of such a future of bliss. What am I in her eyes? Merely, no doubt, a poor fisherman, who once had the luck to render her a service, and was rewarded for it by a promotion that turned out to be short-lived. And yet I have rights—could I but venture to claim them—and a word from me would— But the word must remain unspoken!'

Very sad, to judge by the almost despairing expression of his handsome young face, were the thoughts that now traversed the brain of Hugh Ashton. Twice he turned, as though to leave the place, and twice he checked himself, and again fixed his eyes upon the house that held the beautiful girl whom he felt to be so hopelessly out

of his reach. 'Never, never!' he muttered at length. 'The Dowager herself, so kind before, was quite changed when that accursed rumour, whence I know not, came to her ears. I could see that she looked on me as a sort of outlaw—outlawed for no fault of his own, it is true, but none the less to be hounded and hunted out of the place. So dreadful and so tenacious is the stain of imputed guilt! And he, so noble and pure and gentle, lived and died, without right being done, hidden from the face of day; and I alone, perhaps, of all the world, believe in the cruel wrong that he endured so meekly.'

Hugh was silent for a space, and then, with a last lingering look at the windows of the two pretty rooms, he murmured once more: 'Farewell, Maud, farewell!' and tore himself away. Ten minutes of hard walking brought him to a turnpike road, down which he turned almost mechanically, as if he cared not whither he went, now that Treport was left behind him. 'Farewell, sweet Maud—my love, my love—of that, at least, they cannot rob me,' he said bitterly, as he looked back and caught one more distant view of Llosthuell, and then in silence pursued his way.

HAPPY LAND.

On the coast of Suffolk, and not far from Ipswich, there is a certain sea-side place called Felixstow, which as yet is little known to tourists. There we have spent such delightful days that we have christened it Happy Land; and in gratitude for the enjoyment, we are glad to let others know of a spot where they can escape from fashion, brass-bands, nigger minstrels, barrel-organs, and rapacious landladies.

Come therefore reader, and join us in Happy Land. Bundle up a few things, not fashionable; take your ticket for Ipswich, and drive thence to Felixstow; and when you arrive at the dear little spot, engage one of its pretty cottages, and prepare for a week or two of pure unsophisticated enjoyment. Our neighbours to the right and left in the row in which our cottage is situated, are old farm-servants who have got on, saved a bit of money, and can now afford to live in a seven-roomed cottage, with pretty gardens railed from the road and each other by a low wooden fence. In front of us is a barley-field, with houses, about four or five, dotted here and there at the further end. We are on the cliff, down which we shall ask you to come presently. The view beyond the barley-field from the window of our cottage parlour gives only a thin line of sea, on which a steamer, ships, or fishing-boats are passing.

How delighted are we when we find ourselves taking a cup of five o'clock tea in such surroundings! How luxurious the flowers! Was there ever such barley! And then the sea; and better still, the glorious energy-giving breeze! We are impatient now to be off and away on the beach. We have not far to go. A hundred yards takes us to the end of our road, which is struggling into life. It will be a street some day. Now there are blocks of small houses only at intervals, with gaps between; and opposite, the barley-field holds its own. But we feel the day is coming when half our happiness will be removed away, and the golden barley will have given place to bricks and

mortar for ever. Still we must not meet troubles in this way. At the corner, we come upon the one provision-shop in the place. What an *olla podrida* it is! Post-office, baker, grocer, shoemaker, buttermilk, toy-shop, druggist, all in one. It is here we run if the butcher from the nearest village fails us, for something to make good his forgetfulness and to feed our ravenous appetites. We won't say anything about his prices. Naturally a man expects to be paid handsomely if he sets up a shop on a cliff, and finds himself without a competitor for the custom of a place whose inhabitants, judging from ourselves, are always hungry.

But now we are at the edge of the cliff. What air! We stop to inhale and admire. Along the top there is a pathway, and seats for those who are not inclined to descend, where the breezes can bless them all day long while they lounge with book and pencil. There is a wide spread of beach beneath their feet, but it is disfigured for a good way by breakwaters at regular distances. The sea has encroached so much of late years, that these have been found indispensable to prevent it damaging the shore, and even washing away the buildings. As an instance of this, a local informant tells of a 'famous castle that once stood on the edge of one of the cliffs as being wholly lost, and the ground on which it stood is now far out at sea.'

But these breakwaters do not extend all the length of the beach, and where they do, are much appreciated by the youngsters, who play gymnastics over them; to say nothing of the older children, who find them comfortable resting-posts when lounging on the shingle. Beyond them, on each side, there is a good stretch of shingly and sandy beach, where we can walk for miles, and find the way pleasantly beguiled. For are we not looking out for things we never met with before until we came to Happy Land, which is full of interest for the curiosity-hunter? Here we come upon a beautiful bit of carnelian; there, a shark's tooth (an antediluvian shark, be it remembered). Then again a wonderful impression left in stone of some dead-and-gone animal. All that loose shingle we see, now that we know these treasures are to be found for the seeking, how interesting it all becomes! Hour after hour we sit grovelling among the stones if perchance among them we can be lucky enough to find a fossil; and then what a shout of delight when one is discovered! We think of Hugh Miller, and wish we had his books at hand, that we might search in them, and find out all about the specimen, which we shew as a trophy of our perseverance and our ignorance! 'Antediluvian' we cry indefinitely, and are satisfied.

But we don't find carnelians only; amber and jet are to be picked up by the diligent searcher. We saw one splendid bit of amber measuring nine inches in length by four broad and three in depth, which had been picked up on this beach, and purchased by a resident friend of the lucky finder; for this was a very 'lucky find,' by no means common, the amber and jet found here being in small quantities, as a rule.

But what are these 'finds' to the treasures of antiquity that lie buried in the cliff, or crag as it is called here, filled full of prehistoric remains? If you take a knife and cut a piece of

the soft sandy rock, you find that it is composed of nothing but pulverised shells—shells that Shem, Ham, or Japheth might have picked up had they been wandering here as little boys before the Flood. Now and again we come upon perfect shells, preserved throughout the ages in their bed of sand, and carefully we handle them. They are yellowed by time, and venerable even to brittleness. Some are scallops, others whelks, whose spires turn the reverse way to their brethren of the present day! We also find some exquisite minute shells, that we manage to pick out whole from the debris.

But the things that are most novel to us are the coprolites. Imagine polished-looking black pebbles of all sizes and shapes, varying in form from a smooth round black bean to a large turkey's egg, some long, some short, some round; in fact they must be seen to be realised. A slight thing will break them, and the substance looks as if it could be reduced easily to powder. Our local informant declares 'that no one has satisfactorily accounted for their origin, but it is supposed to have something to do with antediluvian animals.' Science has discovered a means of reducing it to a manure which is used for agricultural purposes.

Anxious to discover some of these old-fashioned things, we started off one afternoon to some coprolite pits near; for pits have been dug inland to keep the scattered fragments together which the pickers are employed to collect. Here we found a mound of these pebbles, of all kinds and sizes. Among them we came upon a petrified crab; and we have seen, though we were not fortunate enough to find, a *whale's ear*, also in a state of petrification, that was found here. Some fossilised bone, one crab, five sharks' teeth, and some coprolites, consoled us instead, and we returned well satisfied with our plunder.

The sea-bathing here deserves especial mention. The machines are the best ever built, and the attendance excellent. The water is buoyant; but unless a swimmer, we do not recommend any one leaving hold of the long ropes attached to the machines, by which the most timid bather is given confidence and can defy the rudest waves. A boat is always on the beach in case of accidents, but no instance is on record of any one having been drowned.

Happy Land is one of the few places still left to us where ladies go ungloved, and forget that they ever looked into *Le Follet*; where sober men of banks and business do not scorn to be seen on the back of a donkey; where a gallant but choleric officer is not ashamed to be seen at his garden gate looking out impatiently for the milkman who is keeping him waiting for his breakfast. In fact, this 'waiting for the milkman,' jug in hand, is a morning rendezvous, and ends in a gossip about various matters of local interest with our neighbours to the right and left.

The drives about are as pleasant as indifferent roads can make them. Being in Suffolk, of course we drove to Ipswich to see the Museum (one of the best of its kind in all these counties), and to lunch at the *White Horse* of Pickwickian notoriety. We were shewn up into No. 27 bedroom, where Mr Pickwick was supposed to have strayed in, and to his confusion found when too late that it belonged to another, and

that other a lady. There are the identical curtains out of which he popped his venerable head to see a lady at her toilet. All hail, imagination that could so convert illusions into realities! After luncheon we sallied forth in search of Angel Lane, at the bottom of which was the celebrated passage in which 'Sam Weller' saw 'Job Trotter emerge from a green gate'—the same green gate by which Mr Pickwick was taken to answer for his conduct before the Ipswich magistrate. We had some trouble in finding it; and to facilitate matters asked an elderly female standing at her house-door if she knew which was Mr Pickwick's gate.

'Mr 'oo, did ye say? Peek'—

'Pickwick,' we reiterated.

'Na, I've lived 'ere naigh upon twanty year, and I niver hard of Mr Peekweek.'

'Not Dickens's Pickwick?' we asked.

'Ay; I knows Dickens, and read about 'm when I had my sight; but I don't know no Mr Peekweek.'

So we left her, regretting she had missed one great pleasure in her life.

We made some valuable acquaintances among the humbler but well-to-do folk, and found them the best of company. We shall not soon forget one drive we took, when our Jehu—an old man of seventy-two—volunteered to act as cicerone. Of course we wanted to know who lived in every well-looking house we passed, and his descriptions were unique. The School-board is busy here, and their bright red buildings are plentifully scattered about in different villages.

'Well, Jehu,' we asked, 'and what is the effect of all this learning? Is it making the people better or worse?'

'Warse!' he grunted. 'I niver had no larnin', nor my old 'ooman, nor niver wanted it. I *workd* [worked]; and they be all lazy.'

'Ah! there is a pretty place. Whom does that belong to?' we cried.

'That there,' giving the horses a flick with his whip—'that there belong to a maid. She's fifty year old, and got a bit of money, and she's niver bought a 'usband. Yoo shuld hear har speak. She's got a meetin'-ouse. Oh, she'll talk to ye, and give ye a little book to read, and tell ye aboot no end o' things; but'—giving a knowing look round—'she'll niver give ye neither bite nor sup.'

On we went, passing farm after farm, until we reached a public-house, where Jehu without permission pulled up to refresh his thirsty palate with a glass of ale.

'Do you always pull up for beer?' we inquired.

'Yes, yes,' he replied patronisingly. 'I likes to help them to *pay the rent*.'

We got on theology at last, and here Jehu came out strong.

'Do ye know [pronounced like *cow*] the prayers I say every day? I prays in the mornin' that I may do as much good as I can all the day, and as little harm.'

But best of all was when he descanted upon Church versus Dissent, or Parson versus Minister. 'Wall, yoo see the parson he hev tithes ten-and-sixpence in the acre; yes, that's what oi pays' (for Jehu rents land as well as being a cab proprietor); 'and the minister he hev none. But for

all that, I likes the parson best, for in church he do pray "as well for the *body* as the *soul*." But the minister, he *all* for soul.'

Who wouldn't have stood Jehu a treat after that! Dickens would have loved him. A friend declared they must have known each other, for he has a face, our Jehu, that brings one back to Cruikshank, who has immortalised it, or one like it, in one or more of his characteristic illustrations. We only wish we could convey the tone and gesture with which each remark was made, and then perhaps our readers would enjoy our drive with Jehu as much as we did, and laugh as heartily. Perhaps, however, they may yet have the opportunity of doing so for themselves.

THE SCOTTISH BANKER'S DILEMMA.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

MR DUFF, the worthy and respected agent of the Central Bank at Tollkirk, was startled by his teller, James Hamilton, coming to him to say, just as the banker had signed the last official letter before proceeding to lock up the safe: 'I am sorry to say, sir, the cash appears to be one hundred pounds short.' James was very pale as he spoke, and despite his efforts to prevent it, his voice trembled. A stranger could not have told whether the youth's agitation was the result of fright or guilt.

Mr Duff knew him too well to let the latter alternative dwell in his mind for even a moment; but the lad's excitement was somewhat infectious, and it was with just a little throb that he replied: 'You're joking, Jamie.' Mr Duff leaned back in his chair and nibbled the feather-end of his quill as he looked in the lad's face.

'I was never more serious in my life,' reiterated Hamilton.

'It is some mare's-nest, depend upon it,' said Mr Duff in a tone that partly reassured the poor fellow. 'Have you been very busy at the desk to-day, James?'

'That is the mystery of it, sir; we have not been busy. Hardly three pages of our cash-book are filled.'

'A hundred pounds! Hm! I am going upstairs to dinner. In the meantime, check your summations and your cash, and by-and-by I'll come in to lock up the safe with ye.'

The teller went from the banker's room to the outer office with a very grave face. Mr Duff, who lived with his family, as is customary in Scotland, in the very commodious house attached to the bank, sent his letters to be copied by the junior clerk, and then went leisurely up-stairs to dinner.

Mr Duff's was, for a man who does not object to permanent residence in a provincial town, a very easy and pleasant mode of life. His work was not hard, nor were his responsibilities very heavy. He had a pretty and comfortable home in an old-fashioned country town, and although his wife lay in the churchyard on the brae by the river-side these ten years, still he had two of the prettiest girls in Tollkirk—Minna and Mary Duff (besides Jenny, the married daughter, who lived in Edinburgh), whose delight it was to make his life sunny and happy. He was naturally—being known to possess private means, and on account of his official capacity as the dispenser

of discounts and custodian of the wealth of the neighbourhood—a man of some importance in Tollkirk, and formed part of, as well as moved in, Tollkirk's best society. He was magistrate and farmer as well as banker; and on Sundays, for many a long year, he had stood beaming behind 'the plate' at the entrance to the 'auld kirk.' Everybody knew him, and he knew everybody; and perhaps nobody respected him the less because he pretty well knew to within a pound or two what every ratepayer on his side of the county was worth, financially.

He took life very easy, as I have said; making no undue fuss when an accommodation bill was presented to him, if he knew—as he was certain to know—the pedigree and progress through life of drawer and indorser. He was respected too by his Edinburgh employers as a man of prudence and sagacity, who never made bad debts, never troubled them with applications for rise of salary or transfer of agency—whose books always stood the minutest inspection, and who, speaking generally, wanted no favours from them. Rather, granted favours, by occasional invitations to visit him at Tollkirk, where there is unsurpassed trout and salmon fishing, besides magnificent 'links' for golf, and where the local distillery yields a liquid of more than local reputation. The city-birds were not slow to accept such invitations, Mr Duff being over a tumbler of toddy the best of company, and generous in the matter of horses and fishing-rods. The chief inspector of the bank came often enough to woo the fair Jenny, the eldest of the family, and took her away with him one summer day, to the general bereavement of Tollkirk.

The banker did not hurry over dinner on the particular afternoon of which I write. When he went up-stairs he did not give a second thought to James Hamilton's pale face, but quietly settled himself in his arm-chair, after doing justice to his simple repast, to read for the second time the report of his own recent great speech at the parochial board, given at length in the *Tollkirk Herald*, the fine roll of his own—somewhat improved—spoken sentences seen in black and white, communicating a pleasing sense of complacency and importance as influencing public opinion. It was nearly seven o'clock before Mr Duff remembered that he had not yet locked up his safe, and that his clerks were probably waiting below for him. He was surprised when he opened the office-door—leading to the hall of his house—to find Hamilton still bending over his cash-book with an expression of deep anxiety on his face, and bundles of bank-notes lying on the desk before him.

'What, James, still in a fog?' he asked cheerfully as he came in. 'Not found your difference, eh?'

'I am a hundred pounds short, sir, without doubt.'

Hamilton had toiled through every entry over and over again, had counted and recounted his bundles of notes, and now had a very sharply defined fear in his heart, and a vision in the background of his imagination of a dearly loved old mother waiting for him at home, and who was ill able to bear the responsibility of such a loss—if loss it should prove to be.

'A mare's-nest, I'll be bound,' Mr Duff said

good-naturedly, taking Hamilton's place before the cash-book. Very carefully and with a keen eye he went over each entry; very carefully too he counted the cash, and recounted it; but only to find that Hamilton's words were too true. The cash was undoubtedly one hundred pounds short.

'I think we had better sleep over it,' Mr Duff said at last, looking at his watch. 'The difference will turn up in the morning, you may depend upon it.' Then the cash and books were carried into the safe, and the office closed for the night.

Poor Hamilton lay awake nearly all night thinking over some probable clue to the whereabouts of the missing money. Never before had he left the bank with such a dread on his mind, for he felt certain he had gone over each item of the day, that he had not over-paid any one to such an extent; and he knew that on him devolved the responsibility to make good any such deficiency. He hardly spoke to his mother as he ate what she called his 'ruined dinner'—spoiled by three long hours' waiting in the oven; nor could she get from him all through the evening a hint of the cause of his trouble. She guessed, and hinted that perhaps Minna Duff, 'the little flirt,' had something to do with his gloom; for she knew how her boy's heart lay in regard to the banker's younger daughter; but her son's reply was equivalent to a snub.

He was in the office two hours before official bank-hours on the following morning; but no trace of the missing money could be found. During the day, all the banker's customers who had on the previous day been paid large sums, were asked to check their payments; but when four o'clock arrived and the cash had again to be counted, the balance still shewed one hundred pounds short. If the money had been paid away in error, no man had been honest enough to return it. Then for the first time in the history of the Tollkirk branch, a deficiency in the cash had to be reported to the head office. A hundred pounds to a rich man may seem a small matter to worry over; but to James Hamilton, whose yearly salary, after ten years' faithful and conscientious service, did not amount to one hundred pounds, and whose mother—save for the help of a trifling annuity left by her husband—was in great measure dependent upon him—the liability to refund this sum weighed heavy. He became anxious and nervous, not being altogether certain that the authorities of the bank might not suspect him of having appropriated the money; and from very nervousness was guilty during the next few days of making several small mistakes in his cash dealings, which confirmed him in the belief that he had paid the money to some unscrupulous rascal who did not mean to acknowledge it.

It seemed an age, although in reality barely a month had passed, before a note from Mr Tait, the chief inspector (Mr Duff's son-in-law) set the matter at rest. 'In consideration,' the note ran, 'of the admirable mode in which the business of the branch at Tollkirk has hitherto been conducted, the Directors have agreed to wipe off the deficiency in cash, which it may be hoped will yet turn up and be re-credited; but in doing so it must be firmly kept in view that the Directors by no means establish the present case as a precedent, and must remind the gentleman who has charge of the

bank's cash at Tollkirk that at no future time will the Directors be disposed to relieve him of the responsibility attaching to his office.'

'There, Jamie; take *that* to your mother,' said Mr Duff kindly, handing the official note to Hamilton. 'I thought Peter would manage it' (referring to his son-in-law, the inspector); 'but we maun ca' canny,' said the banker, relapsing into broad Scotch, to put the reproof, if such it might be called, in the gentlest form, to spare the lad's feelings.

There were tears of relief in Hamilton's eyes as he read the note. 'That is generous treatment, sir; I was afraid they would roup [sell by auction] me and my old mother out of Tollkirk.'

'Roup ye? I couldn't spare ye, lad.'

Then the youth went home to his mother jubilant, a burden lifted from him.

But on the next evening, after business hours, Hamilton's face was whiter than ever. His hands were trembling as he fumbled over his cash, and 'cast' and 're-cast' the long columns of figures in his cash-book. It was market-day, a busy day, and large sums had passed into and out of his hands. To his horror, he found his cash *three hundred pounds* short! He had not the courage on this occasion to go to Mr Duff's room with his plaint. But the banker saw at once as he passed through the office on his way up-stairs that something was wrong.

'You are late, Mr Hamilton.' (Mr Duff never in a general way called James 'Mr.' His doing so now implied misgivings.)

'Yes, sir; but I think I won't be long;' his lips felt parched from excitement.

'Are ye ready to lock up the safe with me?'

'Not quite. If you are in no hurry, sir, perhaps we can lock up when you come down.'

'Very well.'

Mr Duff went up-stairs; but on this occasion he did not linger over his meal. When he came down half an hour later, Hamilton was not ready to lock the safe. He was sitting looking into space, his head resting on his hands.

'Have you balanced your cash now?' Mr Duff asked with just a perceptible edge of annoyance in his tone.

'No, sir. I differ three hundred pounds.'

'Over or short?'

'Short, sir!'

'Mercy on us! This will not do. You must bestir yourself and—find it. I have to go out to a meeting to-night.' The banker spoke sternly.

Hamilton once more, under Mr Duff's eye, nervously went over his figures and counted his cash. The deficiency could in no way be accounted for.

'This is terribly awkward, James.'

There were tears in the youth's voice as he uttered: 'Yes sir; and it will drive me mad.'

When Mr Duff returned from his meeting at eleven o'clock, Hamilton was as far from peace as ever. The younger clerks had gone away. Again the banker and Hamilton went over each item together—in vain.

'We can't report this to the head office, whatever happens,' quoth Mr Duff grimly.

'What is to be done, sir?'

'Find it!'

They looked blankly in each other's faces.

Both men went to bed with heavy hearts; nor did the search next day throw any light on the mysterious transaction. Mr Duff could not bring himself to report this second deficiency to his head office; and the only alternative left was to refund the amount from his own private means. This, as may be imagined, he did very reluctantly; and for the first time in his experience he watched the younger men, and perhaps his trusted teller too, with just a faint and irrepressible glimmering of suspicion. A mistake of this sort might happen once; but to happen a second time at so short an interval, made him uneasy on other matters than mere loss of money. He had a framework of mahogany and glass made for Hamilton's desk, so that no one could come near the cash in future but Hamilton himself. And so, with what grace he could summon, and with many grave warnings, Mr Duff paid the 'short' money, having, as he said, to 'grin and bear it.'

For a week or so things worked well under the new arrangement; but for the third time Mr Duff was destined to see Hamilton poring over his books long after bank hours, this time to hear on inquiry that the luckless lad was short by no less an amount than five hundred pounds! Had the shrewd, quick-witted James Hamilton, after ten years of faithful service, become suddenly dolt?

'This is beyond endurance,' the banker said sharply, as the fact was communicated to him.

'It is most strange,' replied the helpless teller, feeling that the Fates were against him.

'It is impossible you can have paid the money away.'

'It is gone, sir.'

'Then you must find it. I can no longer be responsible for your blunders. Here is no less a sum than nine hundred pounds in less than six weeks to be accounted for. Many a one has been sent across the sea for less.'

The youth put his hands over his face and fairly burst into tears. 'I must give it up, sir. I can't stand this. I must leave the place.'

Mr Duff was looking at him with very keen eyes as this was sobbed out. 'Leave Tollkirk? Understand, Mr Hamilton, that you *dare* not leave Tollkirk before this matter is cleared up.'

For the greater part of the night the men sat up searching; but when the morning came they were as far from the mark as ever.

Mr Duff, much to the surprise of customers of the bank, next day 'took over' the cash himself, and, rather awkwardly from want of practice, became his own cashier. Hamilton was degraded to subordinate duties. His spirit, poor fellow, was fairly broken. No trace of the missing money could be found. Of course Mr Duff could not long continue acting as teller. The work interfered with even more important duties.

A son of Mr Traill the parish minister, who was employed at the Aberdeen branch of the same bank, at this time visited Tollkirk, and being of the same craft, spent a good deal of time in Mr Duff's company. The subject of the missing money was broached and discussed between them. It so happened that George Traill was engaged to be married to Mary Duff; and the banker having lost confidence in Hamilton, and feeling sorely in need of capable help, proposed that George should apply to the Directors of the bank

for the appointment of joint-agent or partner with himself in the management of the Tollkirk branch. So it came about that in a short time George Traill, a shrewd, practical business man, relieved Mr Duff at the telling-table, in order to familiarise himself with the faces of the bank's customers. For some days all went well. Then came market-day. At close of the day Mr Traill's cash was five hundred pounds short!

ODD AND WHIMSICAL FUNERALS.

THERE are some people whose love of singularity is not limited to the scenes and events which they themselves may witness or enjoy. They may be said in one sense to wish to live again on this earth after their death, and to participate in their own *post-mortem* celebrity. This eccentricity is not confined to the questions whether or not their dead bodies shall be inclosed in coffins for interment, nor whether they shall be buried standing up, sitting down, or prostrate on their backs. (See 'Burial Eccentricities,' *Chambers's Journal*, September 22, 1877.) It manifests itself also in the vestments to be worn by the deceased in the grave, the procession or cortège to the place of interment, the selection and treatment of the mourners, the position and materials of the grave, the nature and arrangement of the tomb or monument, and the provision for keeping it in repair. Individual whimsicalities these, not belonging collectively to any special nation, creed, age, or profession.

Feasting and drinking at funerals used to be carried to great lengths, and it is only in recent times that this form of unseemly extravagance has disappeared, except in remote situations. Pre-tentious display was also carried to extremes. At Old Swinford, in Worcestershire, some years ago, a coffin on being opened was found to contain the remains of a lady dressed up in a full old-fashioned costume; there were a multiplicity of pins in her dress, all blackened with age and tarnish. In 1763 a young lady, in fulfilment of her last request, was buried in her wedding garments—in this wise: Her white negligée and petticoat were quilted into a mattress, pillow, and lining for the coffin; her wedding shift was used as a winding-sheet, with a fine point-lace tucker, handkerchief, apron, and ruffles; a point-lace lappet was on her head; and she wore her earrings, finger-rings, necklace, white silk stockings, and silver-spangled shoes with steel buckles.

Many persons in medium circumstances formerly made a great effort to emulate the magnificent at the burial of their friends. A case in point was that of a cheesemonger in Thames Street, whose body 'lay in state' for a week, and was followed to the grave by a train of coaches each drawn by six horses, and flanked by mutes and flambeau-bearers. The Emperor Charles V. is said to have rehearsed his own funeral, to see and hear how it would 'go off.' Tomb, coffin, black trappings, monks, domestics, taper-bearers, all were duly provided; and the imperial recluse

(he had abandoned the splendours of sovereignty over Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Naples, Sicily, and the Indies, and retired to a monastery in 1557) caused himself to be carried in his own coffin. Not only did he hear his own requiem sung, but joined in it himself! His funeral obsequies were observed in reality soon afterwards.

A somewhat less important person in the eyes of the world was Mrs Margaret Crosins, of Cuxton in Kent, who was buried (in 1783) in a costly dress of scarlet satin. During her lifetime she caused a pyramid-shaped monument to be erected; under it was a vault with a glass door, a green-silk curtain in front of the glass, and a lock and key placed inside. Resting on tressels in the vault her mahogany coffin was placed, but not fastened down. Gossips would have it that she had provided the means of letting herself out, in the event of reviving after interment.

In a great number of instances, oddity has been more studied than magnificence, costliness, eating, or drinking, at the funerals of whimsical folks. A dust-contractor in the days of George IV. left instructions that the procession following him to the grave should comprise twelve boys carrying links, twelve men carrying dustmen's whips and shovels reversed, a favourite horse provided with cloth spatterdashes, a dust-cart covered with black baize, the coffin in the cart, surmounted by a very large plume of white feathers, twelve dustmen and brickmakers as pall-bearers, all clad in white flannel jackets and leather breeches; the whole wound up by a long string of carts filled with dustmen, cinder-sifters, and chimney-sweepers. A few years earlier, one Mr Woodford, of Fetter Lane, displayed oddity with a little more gentility than the dust-contractor. Being a member of the Lumber Troop (a Volunteer corps in the City of London), he left instructions that after his death his body should be carried to the troop-room and thence borne by troopers to the grave; that minute-guns should be fired during the funeral procession; that a military salute should be fired over the grave in St Bride's Churchyard; and that a crooked guinea (crooked, we presume, for luck) should finally be spent in punch and tobacco to regale the troopers. A crotchety old Yorkshireman about half a century ago left directions that the day of his burial should be ushered in with a great public breakfast in the town where he might die; that the coffin, slung upon towels knotted together, should be borne along by relays of men, and 'bumped' three times upon a particular heap of stones; that the *Lamentation of a Sinner* should then be sung; and that every man, woman, and child who entered the churchyard with or after the procession should receive a dole of sixpence. Never, we may fairly believe, was that particular churchyard before or since so plentifully filled with living beings: mourners only in this sense, that they longed for a succession of men who would order their funerals in similar fashion. One old lady, an inveterate snuff-taker, left a will in which the bequests were mainly dependent on the observance of certain rules connected with her favourite excitant. Snuff was to be thrown into the coffin before the snuff-taking testatrix was 'screwed down;' snuff to be strewn on the threshold before the funeral cortège passed out; the coffin to be borne by the six most

determined snuff-takers in the parish; six old maids as pall-bearers, with well-filled snuff-boxes in their hands; snuff to be strewn on the ground at every twenty yards in advance of the coffin; and the officiating clergyman's large retaining fee to be in some way proportionate to the quantity of snuff he took during the ceremonial.

An eccentric Nottingham man known as Ned Dawson was strong in his Toryism as in his eccentricity. He caused his coffin to be made during his lifetime, and painted true-blue (the Tory colours). He used it as a cupboard for twenty years; but once each year, on the anniversary of his birthday, he brought it into requisition in a still more singular manner. He dressed in his best clothes, and lay down in his coffin to see that it was all right in dimensions; then emerging, the coffin was filled with goodly viands, and carried on the shoulders of his associates, he himself following as chief-mourner with a large pitcher of ale in his hand; and so the procession made a tour of some of the rooms and passages of his house—ending, as may be readily guessed, in a repast partaking of the nature of a 'jollification.'

Early in the present century one Captain Backhouse, a military man who had been in the East India Company's service, was buried in a style singular enough though not outrageously extravagant. He built himself a house in eccentric fashion at Missenden in Buckinghamshire, and made anticipatory arrangements for his funeral, certainly marked by no great reverence for established usages. 'I will have nothing to do with the church or the churchyard; bury me in my own wood on the hill, and my sword with me; and I'll defy all the evil spirits in existence to injure me.' His remains were deposited according to his will. A kind of dwarf pyramid of flints and brickwork was constructed, about eleven feet square by fifteen feet high, with a small Gothic window on the north side and another on the south. Being partly overgrown with ivy, and in a thick plantation on the top of a hill, it is about as far removed from the eye of a passing stranger as a monument can well be. The coffin is placed upright in the tomb, and the captain's sword on the top of it. One of his descendants, some years afterwards, wishing to consult public sentiment a little more closely, had the coffin quietly removed from the pyramid and interred in the parish churchyard.

The Rev. Langton Freeman, who was rector of Bilton, in Warwickshire, about a century ago, did his best to obtain for his own funeral a very detailed attention to his own wishes, by certain clauses in his will. 'For four or five days after my decease and until my body grows offensive, I would not be removed out of the bed or place I may die in. And then I would be carried in the same bed, decently and privately, to the summer-house now erected in the garden belonging to the dwelling-house where I now inhabit, and to be laid in the same bed there with all the appurtenances thereto belonging; and to be wrapped up in a strong double winding-sheet, and to be in all other respects interred as near as may be to the description we read in Holy Scripture of our Saviour's burial. The doors and windows to be locked and bolted, and to be kept as near in the same manner and state as they shall be in at the

time of my decease. And I desire that the building or summer-house shall be planted around with evergreen plants, and fenced off with iron or oak palings, and painted of a dark-blue colour. And for the due performance of this in manner aforesaid, and for keeping the building ever the same, with the evergreen plants and the palings in proper and decent repair, I give to my nephew Thomas Freeman the manor of Whitton, &c. The wishes of the testator were duly carried into effect. When two or three generations however, had passed away, and the tomb was well nigh forgotten, an entry was effected by making a hole through the roof, and there the body of the old rector was found nearly dried up. Of course there is no entry of so very unclerical a burial in the parish register, for his successor in the parish could not have signed it if he would.

Some persons, as we have already said, seem determined to make merry after they are dead, or at least afford their survivors the means of doing so. One old man left a bequest to a City parish on condition that the church bells should ring a merry peal once a year; but there was a dark side to this picture, for the peal was to be rung on the anniversary of his wife's death, whereas a tolling was to mark the anniversary of his wedding-day. An advocate of Padua in the sixteenth century directed that none of his relatives should shed tears at his funeral; singers and musicians should be engaged to supply the place of mourners; fifty of them were to walk with the priest before the coffin, each receiving half a ducat as a fee; twelve maidens in green habits were to carry the coffin to the church, singing cheerful songs as they went; lastly, all the clergy of Padua, and all the monks except those who wore black hoods, were to be invited to follow. Every man to receive an honorarium. A Frenchman who died about half a century ago had some time before left instructions concerning the mode in which his obsequies were to be observed. All the musicians of the town were to be invited to attend, and play dancing and hunting tunes during the procession; his house and the church were to be decorated in the liveliest way possible; and (but this must have been a very difficult point to settle) his property was to go to the relative who laughed the most joyously on the occasion.

Some men (in the old days) directed that they should be buried in the very substance of church walls; some that their hearts should be interred separately, or kept in an urn, or bequeathed to a church or a monastery. In a particular lease of a small estate, one family had a right of interment in the garden of a house occupied by another family, leading to a strange mixture of scenes witnessed from a drawing-room window.

A bequest as curious in its provisions as any of the foregoing, comes to us from America: Mr John R. Reid had been gas-manager of Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, for fifty-four years, during which long period he is said never to have missed a single performance. In his will was the following provision: 'My head shall be severed from my body, and my body shall be placed in a vault; but the head shall be brought to the Walnut Street Theatre, there to be used as the skull in *Hamlet*, and I do bequeath my

head to the said Walnut Street Theatre for that purpose.'

[In offering the foregoing examples of eccentricities connected with burials, we would take the opportunity of adding that in all civilised countries there prevails amongst surviving friends a more or less ardent desire to decently bury their dead. This is as it ought to be, and is a feeling which will doubtless continue to exist. Amongst certain classes, however, there prevails what we might term an exaggerated idea of what is due to departed friends. No expense is spared to turn out what is termed a 'respectable funeral,' which in too many cases tells sadly upon the means of the well-meaning but foolish persons involved. Pomp and show far beyond what is required, or indeed what is seemly, take the place of what ought to be a soberly ordered ceremony. A costly array of carriages, and a needlessly incurred cost for funeral trappings, involve the victims to an extent which, though ignored at the time, too frequently cripple the family resources. We also take occasion to remonstrate against the vain practice lately introduced of interring the bodies of relatives in strong and elegantly constructed oak coffins. The practice is not only costly, but positively mischievous in retarding dissolution into that dust which is the universal doom and privilege.—Ed.]

GOLD DREDGING ON THE CLUTHA.

GABRIEL, a shepherd, tending his flocks on the billowy downs and placid flats of Tuaepeka, in Southern New Zealand—deputy-lord of a solitude seldom broken by human footfall or other sound saving the occasional grunt of a wild-pig or the impatient cry of a few paradise ducks in eager flight to inland waters—was the man who, on the fourth day of June 1861, broke the spell of pastoral simplicity under which the province of Otago had lain since its first settlement, by the discovery of gold. 'Gold in New Zealand!' The words rang through the Australian diggings like a call to arms. Veteran gold-diggers who had served their novitiate on the streams and plateaux of California, to whom the diminishing returns of Victorian fields had become a weariness, jerked aside the implements of their industry, and declared that they were wanted 'thar.' Quartz-reefers and puddlers from Bendigo and Kangaroo Flat, ground and box sluicers from Jim Crow and the Ovens, and miners from the deep gutters of Ballarat, hurried, as in desperate case, to take ship from Melbourne. The tent of the prospector glinting white in the depth of the forest, knew its place no longer. Away over the seas, in the gully opened by Gabriel, its place should be, where the yellow metal lay thick strewn and plentiful, and might be washed with ease from its earth-wrappings.

Thus it happened that before the flock-owners and other few settlers of Otago had fully recovered the composure disturbed by Gabriel's discovery, there came to the jetty at Dunedin shipload after shipload of high-booted, free-handed, *debonair* gold-hunters, equipped at all points for the self-reliant

prosecution of their search, and eager to contest their right to 'follow the gold' with any who might gainsay it. Spreading themselves over the face of the bald treeless country, they explored and tested its secret places, unearthing hoards hitherto concealed. Nor did it take long to gather the richest of the golden spoil; for where the precious grains lay thickest, they lay at little depth from the surface of the ground; and as these diggers gave themselves to the work under a sense of territorial right, the areas of country to which they devoted themselves soon shewed evidences of their activity. Soon the flowing lines of the low downs were broken by intersecting trenches and mounds of upturned alluvium, the level expanses of the valleys heaped with the detritus from innumerable excavations, and the whole landscape crowded with inartistic detail. But withal, the country was made glad with the play of human life; towns, to be towns in perpetuity, were founded; Commerce built her palaces; and patient Agriculture took such courage that soon, alongside the golden fleece, the golden sheaf was quartered on the provincial shield.

At an early period of the 'rush,' the probable secretions of the Clutha river afforded a theme on which miners loved to speculate, though for a while none save the most adventurous tempted discovery beside its waters. The Clutha, greatest of all the rivers of Southern New Zealand, has its sources in the Lakes Wakatipu and Wanaka, the former being by far the larger of the two lakes. The clear bright water of the Wakatipu, extending from the base of the dividing range in a south-easterly direction, mirrors the pinnacled mountain ridges by which it is bounded in a surface some fifty miles in length by five miles in breadth. Its depth is untold; at least so say mystery-impressed citizens of Queenstown, who dwelling on its shore, have made it their highway to south and west. Distant some thirty miles from the Wakatipu, the Wanaka sends its overflow to join the stream from the sister lake. The impetuously hurrying streams rush together at the township of Cromwell, and seem to dispute for a time the common passage to the sea; for the heavier volume of the Wakatipu branch, now subsidised by the contributions of the Shotover and Arrow rivers, pushes aside the less forceful sweep of Wanaka waters, till a union is compelled by impeding slips from the neighbouring mountain-range. Then the savage Clutha speeds on its way in power; through rock and ancient lake-bed it surges and roars, as it cuts still deeper the furrow already defined by high ramparts, and carries to the Pacific tribute of the pilfered land.

Hartley and Reilly are the names of the men who secured the bonus offered by the New Zealand government to whomsoever should open payable gold-workings on the Clutha; and they made their discovery some two years subsequent to the discovery by Gabriel. The season had been propi-

tions. Over the whole extent of country drained by the river and its tributaries, the snowfall and rain of the year had been light. The river, stinted in its supplies, ran at a very low level, leaving long strips of pebbly strand exposed to the scrutiny of the prospectors. In these strips of accidental beach the men found their coveted opportunity, and plying pick and shovel, discovered, underlying the loose gravel and boulders, a stratum of tightly compressed brown clay, the crevices of which were in places filled with the lustrous particles they sought for. Self-isolated in an almost naked country, these two men had thus quieted doubt as to the wealth of the river; and if through some invisible telephonic apparatus the certified fact had been sent vibrating through the length and breadth of the low country, the secret had scarcely been disclosed with more immediate effect. Over the jagged spurs and steepes of the Lammerlaw ranges—ranges beset by all the dangers of torrent and precipice, and as yet unmarked by any well-assured pathway—the roused diggers of the lower country, heavily burdened with their equipments of tents, bedding, and rations, urged their way to the river. Strings of pack-horses, laden with all sorts of stores and merchandise, picked their steps over the difficult country; and even woman herself lent her accompanying presence to the advance.

One hundred and ten miles from Dunedin by the mountain road, the Clutha careers through the Dunstan Flat. Here it is a river from eighty to one hundred yards in width, with a current varying to perhaps thirty feet in depth, moving at the rate of about six miles an hour. From its western bank, a semicircular plain recedes, hemmed in by winding spurs and offshoots of the Old Man Range, whose topmost peak, the Old Woman, is some eleven thousand feet above sea-level. At the foot of the Old Woman, the township of Clyde arose; a township reared of calico, biscuit-tins, and gin-cases. For a while Clyde flourished and disported itself in wanton riot. But as the busy thousands were yet delving in bank and beach, the rays of a summer's sun fell on the wide and deep-lying snows of a hard winter; the river resumed its wonted volume and velocity, and the beach-workings were flooded by the swift-flowing current. Then a general abandonment of the river ensued. To the gorges, creeks, and terraces of the adjacent country, a country scarcely tenable in its bareness, but over which gold in small quantities lay scattered, the unlucky dwellers in tents to whom the genius of the river had been unkind, were fain to remove their domestic gods. Reticent men on whom fortune had smiled, withdrew from the rock-bound region, and the river was left in possession of the 'shepherds,' who for months awaited its subsidence; and those rarer spirits, endowed with giant will and strength, who set themselves to resist its encroachments. These latter were the men who fenced the beaches in. They would wade out mid deep in the cold snow-water, building up bags of sand or slabs of rock, till the walls rose above the stream, and inclosed the space sufficient for working pur-

poses; then, by perilous toil of pumping and excavating, they laid the inclosure bare to the gold, and won their reward. Still the revived river maintained its ascendancy; the sounds of revelry waned daily fainter in Clyde; and the town shrank disconsolate within her borders.

It was high-holiday in Clyde the day on which the first dredge was launched—an apparatus that was to make its owners independent of low rivers and dry beaches. Nearer to the front of civilisation, the event would have attracted but little notice perhaps, for the dredge exhibited no novelty in floating architecture, and except for its deck-furnishings, was in fact not different from any ordinary flat-bottomed barge. But it had been built at considerable cost; its planks had been hauled from the Tapanui bush fifty miles away; its anchor, winch, purchase-chains, and shore-lines brought by wagon from Dunedin; and Clyde took pride in it, as giving tangible proof of its own irrepressible enterprise. All the town was at the launch. The mayor and town-councillors; for Clyde, with a population of one hundred and fifty or one hundred and eighty, was now incorporated. The proprietor and editor of the *Dunstan Times* was there; for Clyde, elevated to civic dignity, supported a gazette of her own—a gazette, moreover, with a motto which gave rather exceptional moral status to the town. 'In the hands of men supremely just, the pen is mightier than the sword'—so the motto ran. Old Plodge, master-shipwright and builder of the craft, his face wrinkled and set to stern importance, stood by the bows; and Big Andy, who had received his appointment as skipper, held to the steer-oar. For who better than Andy knew the reaches and beaches of the river, the eddies and swirls; in what places the gold had been traced into water too deep for the paddockers to work in, and where the duffer ground lay! No more nautical man than he could be found on that river. A Shetlander by birth, he had as a boy played on rocky ledges where sea-fowl laid their eggs; and as a man had followed the sea round the headlands of every continent. He knew the work; and integrity looked out from his merry resolute blue eye. Of course the *Dunstan* pen of justice recorded for the world its tale of the proceedings. How the fair hostess of the *Clyde Hotel*, gallantly directed by Old Plodge, took fair aim at the bows of the vessel with the orthodox bottle of champagne, and named her after the town; and how the people raised cheer upon cheer, as Big Andy, steer-oar in hand, guided the craft down the current to her anchorage below Hospital Point.

At 10 P.M. of a certain night in the merry month of May 1870, the *Clyde* dredge lay over good gold. She had struck the metal heavy in about ten feet of water, and her 'spoon' was kept busy night and day. At the hour named, the night-crew, captained by Big Andy, were assembled on the beach to go off to their night's work. Tyke also was there. Tyke! the skipper's wonderful tailless dog. Not even Andy knew of what breed Tyke came; or how, unlike ordinary dogs in that as in other things, he should have but the merest apology for a tail. It was said that he was of the Smithfield breed of drover-dogs; but whatever his origin, the children of the Dunstan Flat would uphold him as the kindest and boldest dog in all the colony. They would dress him in cap and

vest, put a short pipe in his mouth, and at a sign, he would rise on his hind-legs and walk about, a wonder of canine pedestrians. But let the biggest dog in the district cast a supercilious eye on him as he engaged in this self-sacrificing amusement, and Tyke would instantly vindicate his own dignity by testing the courage of his critic.

This particular night being dark, Tyke appears in front of his master with a lighted lantern swinging from his mouth, which he puts down beside the boat, and now with deprecatory air awaits further orders. 'All hands here? Right!' says Andy. 'Let us get aboard.—And Tyke, you go home!' whereupon Tyke vanishes in the darkness, and the boat is shoved off. The oars are not wanted, as the force of the river is itself the motive-power used to propel the boat to the dredge. It is a common practice on the river to utilise the current in this way. All coaches, wagons, and bullock-teams that cross the stream are punted over by contrivances similar to this on which the dredge's crew depend for transit. A line is stretched taut from the shore to the dredge, which lies out in the stream; and on the line is placed a blocked sheave, so that it runs freely along it. To the eye of the sheave-block the boat's painter (bow-rope) is made fast; then by movement of the rudder the boat is laid across the current at an angle of forty-five degrees or so, in which position it receives on one side alone the impetus of the rushing water, from which it recedes, followed along the line by the running sheave to which the boat's painter is fastened. In this way the deck of the dredge has been gained; and after the boat has been secured, and the kerosene lamps lighted, all is declared in readiness for a start. 'Over!' cries Andy; and the dark sullen gleam of the river, as it hurries from the beaming light of the lamps, is fretted for a moment with white spray where the heavy spoon strikes it in its descent to the bottom. 'Heave away!' presently comes the voice of the skipper; and the three men at the winch bend to their work, as the purchase-chain is slowly coiled round the drum, and the spoon reappears above the surface of the water filled to the lip, from the top layer of loose non-auriferous gravel that must be cleared away before the golden dirt can be reached. The spoon is a bag about four feet deep, made of thick sole-leather riveted together with copper rivets. The open end of the bag is laced with thongs of green hide round a circular iron rim, of about thirty inches diameter. From the outside of this rim, at right angles to the pendent bag, a socket projects for the reception of the spoon handle, a Manukan pole about thirty feet long; and opposite the socket, the lip of the spoon, a well-tempered steel-plate, rises above, and is carried for a third of its circumference round the top surface of the rim. Sympathetic movement of spoon and winch is insured by the purchase-chain, which passing over a loose sheave in the craned neck of the davit, connects the two.

The work of the night proceeds. There on the deck, unwound from the barrel of the winch, lie several yards of slack-chain. Hughie the cradleman takes a grip of this chain some two feet back from where it passes over the davit-sheave to the spoon attachment; while Jack the paddockman seizes the spoon by the rim and lifts it as Hughie

pulls on the chain. The skipper has taken the spoon handle on his shoulder; and as Jack swings the leathern excavator over the side, Hughie lets go his hold of the chain; the spoon falls on the water; the slack-chain flies through the davit as the current sweeps into the leather-bag, which, humoured by Andy, is borne to the very spot on the river's bed into which he intends to dig. The skipper takes two turns of the stopper-rope round the spoon handle, that the spoon shall not recoil from its sub-aqueous work; then once again his cheery 'Heave away!' is heard; the winch goes round, and the spoon moves through the gravel down below. So long as the clearing away of the loose drift-gravel continues, the spoon appears and disappears at short intervals, as there is comparatively slight resistance to its progress along the bottom. The work goes on quietly and smoothly. Jack, whose business it is to keep the paddock clear, and who is, moreover, an adept in the use of the long Yankee shovel he flourishes, having to return all this barren stuff to the river over the stern of the dredge, is the most hotly engaged at present.

'Any amount of tailings coming up to-night, Hughie,' he remarks to the cradleman, who is assisting ubiquitously till his cradle is wanted.

'O ay; that's the way of it,' replies Hughie; 'a shipload of tailings to an ounce of gold, Johnnie.'

But presently there is a change. Hitherto the men at the winch have kept the drum revolving in even steady motion. Now they stand straining at the handles in the freezing atmosphere, perspiration pouring from them, and the pinion-wheel refuses to budge an inch. Hughie and Jack jump to the rescue, and the skipper unwillingly slackens his stopper, for the sharp lip of the spoon has cut into the hard cemented boulder-wash in which the precious metal lies. 'Try it again. Something must come, or something must go!' cries Andy; and as he speaks, the men heave with a will, and the spoon slowly comes. As it is swung on deck this time, it will be observed that its contents differ greatly from the stuff it has brought up previously. Here is no longer a bag packed with clean-washed vitreous-lustred quartz and schistose shingle; but a bag of smooth water-worn pebbles, nestling in black sand, flecked with golden spangles and nodules, and shewing boulder-stones of felspar white as the new-fallen snow, and deep-hued porphyritic greenstone veined in lighter shades.

'You had better go to the cradle, Hughie; the child's crying,' says merry Andrew the skipper.

'Ay, ay,' responds Hughie. 'We'll have to bring up the child in the way it should go, I suppose.'

'Was that the way they brought you up, Hughie?'

'Faith, I wasna brought up at all; I was draggit up,' says Hughie mournfully.

'Well, then, they didn't give over dragging till they got you up a good height, Hughie.'

'O ay,' answers Hughie, taking off his Scotch bonnet and exhibiting a bald pate as he goes to the cradle; 'they draggit a' the hair oot o' my head, the caterans.'

The cradle occupies a space at the opposite side of the dredge to that at which the spoon works. It oscillates on rockers, as other cradles do. It is shaped like a baker's trough, its length being

about five feet and its height two. One end of it is open, and projects over the side of the dredge, so that the sand and fine grit that pass through with the water may escape freely. Inside, the cradle is fitted with two plush-covered wooden slides, the one discharging on the other at a sharp angle to the plane of the cradle. When the machine is in motion, the gold and silt are sifted from the gravel on to these slides—the gold by virtue of its density remaining—through the holes in the hopper-plate, over which the coarser dredgings travel, and drop once more into the river. Water falls, shower-bath fashion on the hopper, from a cistern into which it is pumped by the up-and-down movement of the same handle that rocks the cradle. And now the cradle is in full swing, Hughie rocking away at high-pressure as Jack fills the mouth of the hopper with the rich provender lifted by the spoon.

Arduous, straining work to human muscle and sinew, and monotonous to the senses, is this same dredging by night in the black flowing Clutha. The surrounding darkness yields no surprise to the eye; and though you may gaze into the cold depths of that austere firmament where the stars tremble, till you fancy yourself attended into space by relays of visual force, the 'Heave away!' of the river-god who handles the spoon will recall you from the exploration of infinitude, and still your fancy in muscular effort. By-and-by the bottom of the boulder-wash is touched, and Andy springs to the bag to examine the slices of stiff brown clay, speckled with yellow, that appear on its surface as it is hauled on board.

The skipper is in great glee to-night; he pitches his yarns with gusto. In disengaged moments he indulges in a step or two of the sailor's horn-pipe; anon there is given to the darkness a rhythmic souvenir of far-away Shetland, as he sings some old-fashioned Scandinavian ditty. Or visions of sunny Victoria inspire him, and he calls on his mellowest accents as he looks into the night and sings:

Scrumptious young girls, you tog out so finely,
Adorning the diggings so charming and gay;
With your beautiful smiles you look so divinely,
That lovers come round you their homage to pay.

Again he cheers Hughie and tells him that when he is rocking the cradle for the wife, he won't forget the good training he's had.

And thus the toilsome night wears on, till suddenly a faint wan streak sharpens the outline of the eastern hill against the dim background:

The yellow Dawn
Wanders along Night's borders, like the fawn
First venturing from its dappled mother's side—
A timid bound on darkness, swift withdrawn,
Then bolder tried again, the starlight dies.

And presently the snow-frilled brow of the Old Woman is radiant in the smiles of the new-born day. The sullen river, kissed by the morning sunbeams, glides along more lightsofely, and King Frost mitigates his claims in presence of the King of Light.

'Three pound-weight; not so dusty!' the skipper remarks as he secures the product of the night's work. 'Let us get ashore.' And so ashore we go, and then to tent and blankets.

THE MAGPIE AND THE RAT.

A CORRESPONDENT in the north of England favours us with the following anecdotes relating to the above-mentioned well-known animals.

'About three months ago I brought a tame magpie with me out of Staffordshire to my residence here, and shortly after its arrival, it flew on to the window-sill of my sitting-room, seemingly frightened; and on looking out of the window for the cause of its sudden appearance, I found several wild magpies in some trees opposite the window chattering away very loudly to the tame one, which I found they must have previously assailed, as it was strutting about on the sill and chattering back to them in defiance. A short time after this occurrence, Mag flew to the window and knocked on it with its bill, which it invariably does when wanting food. The window was opened, and some pieces of bread put out, one of which Mag immediately picked up and flew with into the trees referred to, and gave it to one of several wild magpies which were there; and this performance Mag repeated several times until it had fed the whole lot of them. And many times during the heavy storm we had at the beginning of the year, Mag fed these wild magpies, who no doubt would have often been sorely pinched for food but for the charity of my bird. But Mag's benevolent deeds, I am sorry to say, are counterbalanced by very bad ones. One of the latter I will relate. On Saturday morning last, my aunt before leaving her bedroom put her watch into its case, fastened it up, and placed it on the mantel-piece. Now Mag must have been at the window and witnessed this; for as soon as the lady's back was turned, the wily creature flew into the room, unfastened the case, which was fastened with two hooks, opened it, abstracted the watch, and broke the glass; and was just on the point of flying off with it, when my aunt fortunately returned to the room just in time to rescue her watch from the feathered thief.

'Not many hundred yards from here, in the village of Sparrow Pit, which is distant from Chapel-en-le-Frith about three miles, there is a farm occupied by a Mr William Turner. This gentleman has on several occasions lately missed some eggs from the place where his hens lay; and one day last week he was accidentally let into the secret of their theft, when upon entering his yard, he was amazed at being the spectator of a wonderful amount of instinct displayed by two rats, one of which had a hen's egg across its shoulder, with its two fore-legs turned round over the egg as far as they would reach to hold it on; whilst the other rat had hold of its tail, by which it was pulling it across the yard, egg and all, to where their holes were. Such a feat as this for two rats to perform seems almost incredible; but nevertheless it is a fact, as the gentleman's word who witnessed it is to be relied on.' [This intelligent method of abstracting eggs has been witnessed before. Sometimes the first rat incloses the egg by clasping it firmly with all four legs, while the assistant rat drags it, egg and all, to a place of safety.—ED.]

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